

Accepting God's Best Gospel - God

1. Intro:

Coach: Ask the kids what they think when they think about God?

2. Key Issues:

God is often thought of as a nice old grandpa who walks around with a long white beard and robes that pats us on the back and sweeps any bad things about us under the rug as if they don't exist. However, the God of the Bible is quite different.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

Exodus 34:6-7 - The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Genesis 1 - God is creator

Gen 1:26-28 - Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

4. Where We Fail:

We think that we are the king of our own life and that God just wants us to be happy.

5. The Lesson:

God is a Holy, righteous God who loves us and created us in his image and likeness. We were originally created to worship him and walk with him.

6. How To Improve:

Thank God for creating you and loving you.

Accepting God's Best Gospel – Man & Sin

1. Introduction:

Last week we talked about God. And we said that God is Holy and Righteous. We also said that God loves us and created us in his image and likeness.

2. Key Issues:

We think we are king of our own domain and that we can do whatever we want and desire. However we were created by God.

3. Scripture:

Gen 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 3 – Fall. Sin enters the World

Romans 3:23 – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

4. Where we fail

We don't realize that we were created by God, but that we have been separated by God because of our sin. Ask the players what sin is? (Anything that doesn't bring glory to God).

5. The Lesson

We are created by a Holy God in his image and his likeness. However, in the garden Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan telling them that they could eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve then took the fruit and ate it and gave it to her husband and he ate it. They disobeyed God and were separated from him by their sin. Their sin has separated us from God

6. How to Improve

Have the players think about the sins they commit.

(Next week we will talk about forgiveness of our sins.)

Accepting God's Best Gospel – Christ & Response

1. Introduction:

The past 2 weeks we have talked about God's holiness and righteousness and how he created us in his image and likeness. Then, last week we discussed how our sin separates us from God. Who remembers what sin is?

2. Key Issues:

We are all sinners and we deserve death. However, we often think there are many ways to heaven

3. Scripture

Romans 3:23 – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 10:9-10 - because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

4. Where we fail

We don't recognize that our sin separates us from God and that we need forgiveness of our sins.

5. The Lesson

We have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Because of our sin we deserve death. However, God sent his son Jesus to live a perfect life and die in our place for the forgiveness of sins.

4. How to Improve

Accept God's gift of His Son who paid for our sin debt by confessing our sins and asking Jesus to be Lord of our life.

"Lord, I know that I am a sinner, please forgive me of my sins, come into my life. I am willing to follow you as best I can and not turn back. Thank you for giving me eternal life

** Coach please record the names of any players who pray to receive Christ. Also, let the players know that if they have made a decision to follow Christ they will be invited to come forward during the gospel presentation at our kick-off camp.

Accepting God's Best Making Right Choices

1. Introduction

How many of you would jump off a bridge or a building if your friends did? Why?

2. Key Issues:

Often we lack the discipline to wait for the best in a situation. We make choices too quickly and without enough information. We need to be tough enough and wise enough to make good decisions. We also need to get advice from friends whom make wise choices. We also need to listen to our parents advice.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom and a man who gains understanding for wisdom is more profitable than silver." Proverbs 3:13-14a

4. Where We Fail:

Because of a desire for acceptance sometimes listen to the advice of unwise friends and make poor decisions and because we are willing to settle for less than the best we make hasty choices

5. The Lesson: *(the story of Joe Perry's younger son, Caleb)*

When my son Caleb Perry was going into high school we moved to Texas. It was a big school and sophomores usually didn't play on the varsity, but within five days of practice he was moved up to varsity. The first day after practice when he came out of the locker room he was stopped by several older players. Two were smoking (even though they had signed a team agreement to not smoke or drink). They stopped Caleb and began to talk to him. They offered him a cigarette. He explained that he didn't smoke, and he even explained that he had worked too hard (in the weight room) to make such a poor choice, and he reminded the players of their team commitment. You might think that doing this would have alienated him from the other players. It did not – he gained great respect from the other players and was chosen as a team captain as a senior. He would also become an All-State player and earned a college scholarship.

6. How To Improve:

- a. choose friends wisely and do not give in to peer pressure
- b. Be patient in making decisions

Accept Only the Best In Character

1. Introduction:

Character has been defined as, "what you are when no one else is looking." In athletics sometimes it is difficult to demonstrate character when we are with a teammate who influences us in the wrong way. There is a lot of discipline required to deny temptation and wait on God's best in the area of your character. The issue becomes will we give in to peer pressure, do wrong things, or demonstrate character, and choose what is right.

2. Key Issues:

- a. We can be tempted to take short cuts to get to where we want to be: cheat on test, take drugs to improve performance, smoke because teammates do, curse when we get angry?
- b. It takes discipline and character not to do these things.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

"Bad company corrupts good character." - 1 Corinthians 15:33

4. Where We Fail:

We're tempted to take short cuts, to go along with the crowd, to not be man enough to stand up for what's right.

5. The Lesson:

(These are fictional stories to use as an example and to ask questions.)

- a. Jamar was a really good running back in little league and in junior high. When he got to high school there was another good back that was a little faster. Jamar's "friend" told him that if he took steroids he could get faster. This friend said he could get the drugs. What would you do?
- b. Justin's grades were poor in English. If he failed the next test he would have to sit out of football for six weeks. Justin knew he could sit next to Sarah and get the answers from her. What would you do?
- c. Caleb was a seventh grader but he was so good, the coaches were going to let him play with the eighth grade team. When he moved up to the eighth grade team, the first day after practice one of the better players offered him a cigarette with several players standing around – what would you do?
- d. George had never cursed. He was going to get to start for the first time next week because he was playing well. One of the regular starters teased George for never swearing, calling him a wimp. What would you do?

6. How To Improve:

Decide early in life what you will and will not do. Don't sacrifice success with short cuts. Your character is everything. Be a real man, do what's right. Often it takes more of a man to not do what friends want us to do that's wrong. It takes more of a man not to curse or get in a fight, etc.

Accepting God's Best In Truth

1. Introduction:

Who has seen the movie Pinocchio? Ask the players to tell the story of Pinocchio.

2. Key Issues:

At times in life it seems that it would be better to tell a lie, because we fear the truth will get us in greater trouble.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

Psalm 86:11 "Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."

John 14:6 "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

4. Where We Fail:

We have all told a lie and gotten away with it. We think "if it worked once maybe it will work again." We can get into a pattern of lying and the consequences will be terrible.

5. How To Improve:

Realize that our character is too important to lie. Realize that Christ said he was TRUTH, so we would never want to dishonor Him by lying. Realize that in the long run the truth is better than a lie. Often if we lie we have to lie again to cover up the first lie. We need to see ourselves as truth tellers.

6. The Lesson:

Abraham Lincoln (one of our country's greatest presidents) said, "I always tell the truth...that way I only have to remember half as much." You can keep your mind and conscience clean by not lying.

Daniel lived only a little way from his elementary school so he would always walk home after school. If he went the back way (through a wooded area and across a creek) he could get home in just a couple of minutes, but if he went the main road it took 10 minutes. His mother told him never to go the back way because it was dangerous. One day he played with some kids after school longer than he should have and forgot the time. He was supposed to be home at 4pm and if he went through the woods he could probably make it in time, but if he went the main road he would be late and in big trouble. He went through the woods and slipped in the creek and got his shoe wet. When he got home his mother asked, "How did your shoe get wet?" What would you say and what would you have done differently?

Accepting God's Best Attitude

1. Introduction:

Attitude is a matter of perspective. Do you see the glass half empty or half full? So often we let negative circumstance convince us that we can't be successful in a given situation. We also need to remember that people close to us can influence our success or failure by their attitude. Some football players, or teams, go into games thinking they cannot win because their team in last place or the team they are playing has not lost a game—you must always believe you can win.

2. Key Issue:

Developing and maintaining a winner's attitude in all situations whether influenced by others positively or negatively. We often allow our attitudes to dip either because of circumstances or because we allow others to negatively affect our attitude.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

As a man thinks he is in his heart, he is. – Proverbs 23:7

4. Where We Fail:

We fail when we see only the problem and not the possibilities in a situation. We fail when we allow others to cause us to doubt because of their negative view of a situation.

5. The Lesson:

When I was in college, our basketball team Louisiana College, a small NAIA school, played Grambling University. Grambling had a great team. In fact, they had two players that would eventually play in the NBA, and others that were very good. They had a seven-foot center and all of their players were athletic. We played a great first half but still trailed. I thought it would be nearly impossible to overcome their physical size and ability (negative thinking). Our coach encouraged us to play better defense and we could win. We allowed only 16 points in the second half, the lowest total ever by a Grambling College team, and we won. As the second half progressed we seemed to get better while they worsened. Our starters believed they could win and so winning became a reality. Do you believe? (Written by Joe Perry, our Minister of Sports Outreach)

6. How To Improve:

Practice believing the best about yourself and your teammates. When doubts come, make a choice to believe the very best. Avoid people who are negative – don't buy into their doubts.

Accepting God's Best With Your Speech

1. Introduction:

Trash talking, cursing, and not being an encourager to your teammates – this is accepting less than the best in your speech.

2. Key Issues:

- a. Some football players believe that trash talking is the only way to play and that this can intimidate others and give them an advantage.
- b. Some players also think that cursing makes you more of a man. Often players are too self-focused and don't encourage teammates.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

When you use a lot of words, you can sin. If you hold your tongue you are wise. The words of a good man encourage others, but a fool lacks judgment with his words. - Proverbs 10:19, 21

4. Where We Fail:

- a. Sometimes words can intimidate other players, but great players are known for their ability and their play on the field more than trash talk.
- b. Cursing doesn't make you a man; in fact, four letter words show your lack of verbal skills.
- c. We are often too focused on our game.

5. The Lesson:

Coach John Wooden, the greatest college basketball coach ever, writes about trash talking in his new book. He would not allow his players to trash talk or curse ever. It takes discipline to choose powerful, positive words. The worst cursers I've ever heard are men in the military, especially new recruits, and seventh grade boys. Both of these are trying to prove they are men. If you are a man you don't have to prove it. Great players are constantly encouraging and challenging teammates. You can do more good "pumping up" teammates than spending a lot of time trash talking opponents.

6. How To Improve:

- a. Focus more on your performance than smack talk. When the play is over, help other players up and evaluate where you could improve on the way back to the huddle. Humility is a virtue. You will gain real respect if you let your play do the talking.
- b. Be a class act. Expand your vocabulary beyond curse words.
- c. When a player makes a good play, encourage them. When a teammate is discouraged, remind them of how good they can be. Tell them the team needs them playing with confidence.

Accept God's Best Academics

1. Key Issues:

- a. We settle for less than the best in school.
 - b. We think school isn't as much fun as sports so, "why bother?"
 - c. We believe we can study a little and still get by.
- We think, "I'll let my friend study and he can give me the answers."

2. Key Issues:

Often boys and men both do not give enough attention to academics (school work). They don't study as hard as they should. They lack the discipline required to be a champion in this area.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

"Study to show yourself approved. A workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling truth." (Paraphrased) - 2 Timothy 2:15.

"Let the wise listen and add to their learning." – Proverbs 1:5

4. Where We Fail:

We fail to see "down the road," later in life when academics will be important because it will be a part of our job. We lack the focus and discipline to study really hard because we accept less than the best in this area.

5. How To Improve:

Make academics a priority. Realize that, you will need what you've learned in school long after you are through playing football. Develop the discipline to study every day, just like we practice sports daily. Strive to do your best, better than ever before. Be a leader in the classroom, make great grades.

6. The Lesson:

From One on One, by John Wooden

I prefer to call myself a teacher rather than a coach. I am also a learner. In fact, I like to think that during my last year of teaching (coaching), I was a better teacher than I was the year before.

I tried to improve each year. Of course, the growth curve is greater at the beginning. I learned more my first year of teaching than any other single year. I didn't show as much progress in the latter years, of course, but I always continued to learn. In fact, even after retiring, I have refused to stand still, and I'm into my nineties.

If I am ever through learning, I am through. You either have to go forward or you'll go backward. You rarely move rapidly upward, but you can go downward very fast.

I'm a visual learner. I do better when I'm able to see something. I had cataract surgery a few years ago. Now my eyes tire and I have to use a magnifying glass. It's inconvenient. The result is decreased reading time, and I feel like I'm missing out on a lot. I'm definitely not getting as much done as I once did, but I'm still trying to discover new things. There are poems I want to memorize and books I want to read. I believe you ought to learn as if you're going to live forever, but you ought to live as if you're going to die tomorrow. If I've learned anything in my ninety-plus years, I have come to understand that it's what you learn after you know it all that really matters.

Accepting God's Best In Teamwork

1. Introduction:

Coach, you've probably seen dozens of acrostics using the word TEAM. Here is one TEAM acrostic.

T – Trust. You have to learn to trust other players even if their recent performance has been weak. If you start second guessing teammates, all kinds of problems develop. Great team players guard each other's back.

E – Everyone together can accomplish more. Great teams raise the bar of belief and expectations for each other. Great teams positively challenge and push each other to get better and better.

A – Accountability. Great teams hold each other accountable on and off the field. All of the team gets credit and blame win or lose. Great teams and players don't blame each other when things don't go well.

M – Mesh. Great teams get better because great players learn how to make up for others' weaknesses. Great teams form a bond of unity that puts them over the top. Nothing can separate them.

2. The Issue Defined:

Most players learn something about teamwork by just playing a sport. Great teams and great players will not settle for anything but the best. They know that there are no shortcuts to excellence. Great players make choices that are best for the team.

3. Bible Verse Reference:

John 15:13: Friends will (give up) lay down whatever it takes for a friend.

4. Where We Fail:

- a. We don't trust our teammates as we should. In fact, sometimes we blame the other player, the coach, whatever, and whomever.
- b. We often don't pull together. We have to understand where we fit best, for the team's sake.
- c. We often take too much of the credit ourselves and blame others when the team fails.

5. The Lesson:

In 1998 the University of Arkansas played the University of Tennessee. Both teams were undefeated eight weeks into the season. With just over a minute to go, Arkansas was ahead and seemed to need only to run out the clock. The quarterback, Clint Steorner, took the snap and started to roll out but stumbled and fumbled the ball. Tennessee recovered and scored, winning the game. As reporters interviewed the quarterback, he took all the blame even though a guard had stepped on his foot causing him to stumble. On the television replay a reporter noticed the guard stepping on his foot so he asked the All-American guard, Brandon Burlsworth, "what happened?" Burlsworth took all the blame. Later the reporter asked All SEC wide receiver Anthony Lucas whose fault it was and Lucas said, "It was my fault, I dropped a ball earlier in the game. If I had caught that ball and scored it would have put us so far ahead nothing else would have mattered." It's no wonder that this was a great team. The following year they beat an undefeated Tennessee team.

6. How To Improve:

Learn to trust teammates, work together, hold each other accountable, and mesh.

Accept Only the Best In Friendships

1. The Issue Defined:

Who is your best friend? Why? Coach, take the time to tell about your best friend growing up and why. Relationships are the most important aspect of life. Friends are a treasure.

2. Key Issues:

- a. Men are more socially closed than women and often do not make good friends because they are not as caring and do not communicate as well.
- b. Men and boys often do not use good judgment in choosing friends. They "buddy up" to whoever is accepting.
- c. Relationships are the most important aspect of life. Friends are a treasure.

3. Bible Verse References:

Proverbs 18:24 "A man of too many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (NIV)"

Psalm 1:1 "Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with scoffers."

4. Where We Fail:

We fail to recognize the value of friendships and we fail to make wise choices about the friends we choose. Though we should be accepting of everyone we should be wise and choose only the best of friends, friends who do the right thing and make wise choices.

5. The Lesson:

Rashad was the youngest player on the team, but he was a very good running back and all the other players seemed to like him. Ralph was the best player, the team leader, but he sometimes made really bad choices off the field. One day after practice, several of the players and their parents went to get pizza. The players went to the restroom to wash their hands. There was a teenaged boy smoking grass (drugs) in the restroom. He told the players he would let them have a drag. Ralph took one and told the other boys it was good. He pointed at Rashad and told him to come take a puff. What would you do if you were Rashad?

6. How To Improve:

Learn to care about and appreciate friends. Exercise discipline in not "running with the crowd" but choosing friends wisely.

7. Closing Prayer:

"Lord, help me to be a good friend, honest and true, help me not to give in to peer pressure to do bad things."